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Learning Together

by *Fay Yokomizo Akindes, Communication*

“We cannot teach meaning. Meaning is to be created together.”

- Voldemar Tomusk

Learning together was a central message in *Voldemar Tomusk’s* opening keynote address at the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL) Conference at Indiana University-Bloomington in October 2009. Tomusk is Director for Policy and Education at the Open Society Institute in London. Originally from Estonia, Tomusk delivered a thought-provoking address that wove together ideas from the sciences and arts, referencing such thinkers as *Stephen Hawking, Ben Okri, and Michael Polanyi*, and complicating the deceptively simple act of

Striving for Excellence

learning together. He reflected on the political and economic pressures facing academe and the challenge of maintaining openness, freedom and democracy in our teaching work. Arguing against individuality, he underscored the ideals of learning together to identify, solve and create problems, to continually learn about the world together. “We must be partners in dialogue,” he said. “We must trust our students.”

Tomusk’s presentation caused me to reflect on UW-Parkside and the challenges we face as faculty. How do we teach and learn how to create meaning? How do we assess learning and meaning-making? How do we engage students in a dialogue of learning? Do we value teaching and learning alongside research? How must UW-Parkside’s structure and system change to encourage and support new models of teaching and learning?

ISSoTL is a fairly new organization, an international commons for faculty and university workers that value teaching and learning as central to their university work. This year’s conference was the sixth year that teaching scholars, including several Carnegie Teaching Fellows, gathered to consider such teaching and learning problems as organizing effective learning communities, integrating social networking sites into the classroom, assessing teaching and learning, writing in the academy, investigating threshold concepts, adapting and adopting new forms of textbooks and information sharing, and others.

There were three of us from UW-Parkside participating in ISSoTL: *Lisa Kornetsky* (theatre arts), *Roseann Mason* (sociology & anthropology; ethnic studies), and me, *Fay Akindes* (communication; ethnic studies). Lisa was part of an integrative learning outcomes project with faculty from five disciplines at different UW System campuses. Her particular study focused on service-learning projects by theatre arts senior seminar students. Roseann and I participated in a panel presentation on diversity learning.

Understanding that “magical things happen when you sit in a circle,” we disrupted the neat rows of chairs and configured them into a circle, then facilitated a discussion on UW-Parkside’s Summer Institute: Infusing Diversity into the Curriculum. Ideas were flying around the circle with participants representing diverse fields such as biology, nursing and psychology.

The 2010 ISSoTL Conference will be in Liverpool and in 2011, Milwaukee. Lisa Kornetsky is one of the local planners for the Milwaukee conference. This is definitely a conference that we shouldn’t miss.

What is the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning? Recently retired Carnegie leader *Lee Shulman* defined it as “public, susceptible to critical review and evaluation, and accessible for exchange and use by other members of one’s scholarship community” (2004:192). In

other words, the SoTL considers teaching a site of research. Converging teaching with research opens up multiple opportunities for UW-Parkside where teaching is our primary activity; 40 percent of our work is teaching-centered. It makes sense, then, to create and participate in a UW-Parkside SoTL Commons. Existing UW-System programs already support SoTL: the Teaching Scholars and Fellows Program and Faculty College, while UW-Parkside’s Teaching and Learning Center, directed by *Jim Robinson*, and the Committee on Teaching and Learning, co-chaired by *Theresa Castor* and *Linda Crafton*, also sponsor SoTL events throughout the year.

Visit this Website for more information on the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning:

<http://www.issotl.org/index.html>

Click on *SoTL Resources* for a comprehensive list of journals and international links.

Learning From One Another: Focusing on Pedagogical Needs and Strategies in the Development of LGBTQ Courses and Course Content

by *Lisa Kornetsky, Theatre*

On October 2, 2009, UW-Parkside hosted a Workshop: *Learning From one Another: Focusing on Pedagogical Needs and Strategies in the Development of LGBTQ Courses and Course Content*. The workshop was supported through a Conference Development Grant from OPID (Office of Professional and Instructional Development), the UW System office that supports teaching and learning activities across the UW System. This day-long event was co-sponsored by the UW-Parkside Teaching and Learning Center and also received support from the LGBTQ Resource Center. Lisa Kornetsky, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts, applied for this grant with the intent of bringing instructors together – across disciplines and campuses – to talk about curriculum infusion of LGBTQ content into our classes.

The workshop was very successful with 42 participants from 11 UW institutions, Carthage

College and the community. There was a panel presentation featuring 5 panelists from different disciplines, including Parkside colleagues, Joe Bergeron, Political Science, and Carole Vopat, English. Each presenter talked about ways in which they have successfully developed courses and course content focusing on LGBTQ issues and material, and shared lessons learned and barriers they have dealt with. Following the panel we spent some time talking about Inclusive Excellence and ways in which various campuses have worked on that initiative. Members of our library staff, Paige Mano and Vanaja Menon did a short presentation on library resources, and we spent the rest of the day working in small groups sharing best practices and ideas.

With a primary goal of linking expertise across the System and building an ongoing community, Lisa worked on the planning of

this event with Liz Cannon, from UW-Oshkosh who will be hosting a second workshop which is being held at **UW-Oshkosh on April 9, 2010**. The primary goals of this workshop, *Embedding Inclusive Excellence into the Curriculum: Sharing LGBTQ Best Practices*, will be to

1. identify ways to embed Inclusive Excellence into the curriculum through LGBTQ content;
2. assist faculty in aligning LGBTQ content with Learning Outcomes;
3. identify best practices for infusing LGBTQ content;
4. exchange discipline based syllabi and assignments.

This workshop, while addressing issues from the first workshop, will focus on curriculum infusion on a wider basis, asking the question of how instructors can include diversity in

general and LGBTQ content specifically into their general education and major courses. As with the first workshop, discussion will address the challenge of teaching material outside one's defined field of expertise, pedagogical approaches to teaching diversity effectively to resistant students, and how incorporating LGBTQ content connects to and is consistent with campus-based learning outcomes and the goals of the Inclusive Excellence initiative.

If you are interested in attending the **Oshkosh** workshop, email lgbtqcenter@uwosh.edu. Put Embedding Inclusive Excellence in the subject line. Please provide your name, email address, work phone number, and the campus and department in the body of the email, and you will be sent an electronic confirmation.

Fall, 2010 OPID Conference Development Grants: Call for Proposals

by *La Vonne Cornell Swanson, OPID Director*

The Office of Professional and Instructional Development offers grants of up to \$1,000 for the development and sponsorship of local, regional, and systemwide workshops and conferences focused on the improvement of teaching.

OPID is particularly interested in proposals that focus on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and in activities that build upon existing campus initiatives focused on teaching and learning. We are always eager to create opportunities for faculty and staff who have received previous Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Grant (UTLG) program grants to share those projects and their results with colleagues. OPID Conference Development Grants also support workshops, seminars or conferences on teaching-related subjects, including meetings of faculty or staff in a particular discipline to discuss teaching issues raised by that discipline. Proposers may invite guest speakers to give presentations as part of

their program. Funds typically support guest travel, materials and some expenses incidental to the funded event; they are not intended to support conference travel for individual faculty members attending non-OPID-funded events.

We request that submissions be limited to the application form and signed by your institution's OPID administrative representative, Jim Robinson. The UW-Parkside **Institutional Deadline is Wednesday, March 31, 2010**.

Completed/signed proposals will be converted to .pdf files for electronic submission to OPID by the Teaching and Learning Center. Proposals are due in the OPID office on April 2, 2010 **for events taking place between July 1 and December 31, 2010**. Proposers may request additional details and guidelines from Kimberly Kile at 608.262.4337 or kkile@uwsa.edu. The grant guidelines and applications are also available on the OPID website at <http://www.uwsa.edu/opid/grants/>

Featured Teacher- The Classroom as a “Virtual Exchange”: Experiences From Teaching “German and American Politics in Comparative Perspective”

by Jonathan Olsen, *Political Science*

Since 2002 – including this fall semester, 2009 - I have occasionally offered the course “German and American Politics in Comparative Perspective” as an upper-division elective seminar in Political Science. This course grew out of a year spent as a Fulbright Scholar in the Institute of Politics, the University of Münster. During my time there the Institute for International Education/Fulbright Commission promoted a new grant, “Alumni Initiatives”, designed to sustain relationships Fulbright grantees have made with their host institutions and colleagues. My friend and colleague in Münster, Professor Annette Zimmer, and I decided to apply for this grant (which we subsequently received) and had the idea of constructing a “hybrid” online course, “German and American Politics in Comparative Perspective”, which would link students in a political science seminar class taught at Münster to a political science seminar taught at UWP. The course has benefitted greatly from the support of our universities and departments, as well as from advice, support, and expertise offered from our Audio-Visual Services (Chuck Hiertz in particular) and, most especially, Jim Robinson, Director of the Teaching and Learning Center.

We conceptualized our seminar as something of a “virtual exchange”. The basic idea behind a virtual exchange is that students at a university in the United States work on a joint project (such as a community project), or participate in a web seminar, or - in our case - be common participants in a class with students at a university abroad. Among the many goals of a virtual exchange is the development of students’ global understanding and cultural empathy, a deepening of the knowledge of other cultures and political systems, and in general, the cultivation of cross-cultural skills. Our virtual exchange grew out of the recognition of two facts about our students. First, we recognized that many of them lacked direct experience with foreign

cultures and often had only a superficial knowledge about other countries and political systems outside of their own. Secondly, we noted that even within that group of students with a decent knowledge of the world, we often struggled to make the material come alive and relevant, since most of our students had had little opportunity for a direct foreign experience that allowed them to “step inside” another culture. This is especially true at Parkside, where student experience abroad and participation in traditional study abroad programs remains relatively low, a fact largely attributable to our particular demographic profile – a very diverse student body, a high number of first-generation students, a high number of “non-traditional” students, and (undoubtedly most importantly) a high proportion of working students who believe they cannot afford the traditional study abroad experience.

We had (and have) three goals for the course. First and most generally, we wanted to increase the knowledge students have of the other country’s political culture. Although our class could not provide students a direct, i.e., unmediated, experience of a different culture, it could, we thought, provide something of an indirect one through contact and communication with students from the other country. A second goal was to have students gain a greater knowledge, in a true comparative fashion, of some of the key similarities and differences shaping politics in two liberal democracies. The means that we put some emphasis on understanding and comparing political institutions and political behavior (such as political campaigns, the role of leadership, etc), reflected in the joint course texts we use. We hoped as well that our class would increase our students’ skills in comparing two different political systems, providing something like a “virtual” field-work experience.

Shortly before we offered the course for the first time a [course website](#) was created,

with pictures of the participants from the two classes as well as pictures and brief descriptions of the two communities, Münster and Racine/Kenosha. Each time the class is offered the (new) syllabus is posted on the website, as well as links to useful sources, such as the websites of local and national newspapers and newsmagazines, the German Embassy in the US and the American Embassy in Germany, and the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies in the US.ⁱ We expect students from both classes to keep current with some of the central political issues in their own local and national communities, as well as in the other group's local and national community. Finally, there is a link to the chatroom and discussion board used for our class discussions, which are accessed through the platform of the University of Wisconsin online learning system (now the "Desire-2-Learn" platform).

During the roughly nine-week part of the course in which the German and American semesters overlap students (usually one German and one American student, although this varies) are responsible each week for analyzing assigned readings, then posting an evaluation/classroom presentation on this on the web, with classroom time used for an electronic discussion of that day's theme. Other students in the class were then assigned to post their thoughts on the readings and on the posted papers by classroom presenters. Since most German students have some facility in English (with many fluent in English), and since we cannot presume knowledge of German on the part of the American students (although some, in fact, do study German and come to the course through this, rather than through an interest in Political Science) the language of instruction is English. This part of the seminar is conducted in "non-real" (asynchronous) time on an electronic discussion board. Regular meetings of the class are conducted in "real" or synchronous time - German students in class in the afternoon, Americans in the morning - using the analyses and reactions posted on the discussion board as a starting point for our discussions in the classroom. My German colleague and I provide the general

structure and organization of each class period but during real-time class discussions act (along with student presenters for the week) as discussion leaders for the students' on-line exchange, posing questions and themes from the readings and discussion board we think pertinent. At the conclusion of each class, we then try to identify, along with the students, the common ideas or thematic patterns which emerge from our real-time discussion. Finally, at several points during the semester we also arrange a "face-to-face" video conference for the students. Email, discussion boards, and chatrooms are often believed to lead to less civil, coarser discussion, apparently because such forms of communication increase anonymity, thus reducing accountability and responsibility. A few videoconference sessions, we thought, would be a way to foster civil and respectful chats. Moreover, students very much welcome the opportunity to see and communicate with their peers in this much more personal way.

It should be clear that our class is not a "true" online course but rather a hybrid, inasmuch as 1) interaction between students and students and the professor are real, not merely "virtual"; and 2) although both classes read from the same literature and do the same kind of online assignments, our classes are autonomous, i.e. each of us develops our own classroom assessment tools consistent with the somewhat different higher education "culture" of our two countries. Thus, for example, although research papers are assigned to each of our classes, we each discuss paper topics with our respective students, set out requirements for the papers specific to our class, and assess our own group of students. Nevertheless, both groups of students are instructed to choose a topic that would be comparative in nature, for example, a comparison of immigration policy in the two countries. Consistent with our goal to facilitate greater interaction and understanding among the two groups of students, however, we have also encouraged the creation of an "expertise and interest board," where students from each class can discuss their particular interest and expertise in their own country that students from the other group could draw on in

writing the research paper. For example, two students in 2003 who were interested in looking at comparative legal systems in the US and Germany developed contacts outside of class (through both email and the discussion board) where they exchanged expertise on their respective legal systems, and advised each other on aspects of their research papers. Indeed, beyond expertise per se, we have encouraged the students to exchange their personal email addresses and/or use the discussion board outside of class to either continue discussions begun during our real-time chats or simply to exchange ideas and get to know each other better.

Initial Challenges of the Course

Although I'd like to report that our class has been an unqualified success without any significant problems, we did encounter some difficulties the first few times we offered the course – some relatively trivial, others more substantial – and we continue to face both technical and pedagogical challenges. To begin with, although Parkside's Fall semester begins roughly around or just after Labor Day and ends shortly before Christmas, and the Spring semester commences after the New Year and ends in mid-May, German universities – also on a semester system – do not begin their 1st semester until mid-October, with the semester ending in February before the 2nd begins sometime in April. Obviously, only the first semester really works for us, and even then the American and German semesters cannot be completed coordinated. However, we quickly turned a necessity into a virtue, realizing that American students in particular, with a much smaller knowledge base about Germany than German students have about the US, could use the time in September to introduce (or review and deepen, as the case might be) aspects of German political history, political culture, and political institutions before both classes would start to meet online in October. Still, "calendar coordination" remains something we always have to stay on top of: the pushing back of Daylight Savings Time to earlier in October in the U.S. a few years ago was a real headache this year, as Germany has not done the same!

When we began our real-time online discussions in 2002 more serious challenges emerged, many of which were connected to the link between the technology used for the course and the expectations and learning goals we had set. There were considerable difficulties in constructing and maintaining the course website and becoming familiar with the technology involved in the real-time chats, discussion board, and other forms of communication. To take the biggest example of this, we encountered a lot of difficulties when employing a web-based (i.e., webcam) videoconference. In 2003 (the last time the course had been offered prior to this semester) the technology of video conferences remained limited. The data traffic of a video conference is extremely high compared with chatting via Internet or using the discussion board; due to limited and varying internet bandwidth the quality of sound and video during Internet conferences via a webcam was quite restricted. We therefore initially decided to have only one videoconference for the course. At the beginning, the students were very shy and felt awkward communicating in front of a camera. This improved greatly as the hour went on. However, the discussion was interrupted several times because of reduced sound quality. Consequently, the videoconference session only partly fulfilled our expectations and learning goals. Even more pedagogically challenging for us was a problem (or more correctly, a series of problems) between the "form" used for real-time class discussions (the chat room) and the "content" of these discussions that emerged soon after our first class meeting. Chat rooms, by their very nature, can privilege brief comments and brief exchanges of ideas over longer ones, especially for students used to the abbreviated form of communication of the text message. This fact meant that our chats would often move quite quickly, posing real challenges for the German students who, although comfortable in English, nevertheless had more difficulties with these quick exchanges than the native-speaking American students. This also meant that certain disjointedness crept into our real-time chats, something noted by many students in post-

class evaluations. Indeed, contrary to our expectations (and fears) that online discussion would be halting, slow, and uncomfortably quiet – a problem all of us occasionally face in a “real” classroom – while our electronic discussions tended to move much too quickly. Part of the reason for this was that all students wanted to chat and make comments constantly. This was not a completely negative thing: we noticed, for example, those students who normally did not talk (or talk much) in class became very active during our virtual exchanges. The format of the course thus seemed to address a classic problem of the “shy learner” who chooses not to speak in class despite the fact that he/she might have quite a lot to add to a discussion. On the other hand, because our real-time exchanges were fast-paced, with a lot of participation, discussions could become quite superficial. At best, this meant a regrettable loss of substance in the chats; at worst, it meant that chats often had a “talk-show” character (in the worst sense) with talkative and/or politically-opinionated students dominating and chats becoming frustratingly shallow. In short, real-time chats, we discovered, often exacerbated problems all too often found in the classroom – the dominating, politically-opinionated student, the lack of real reflection by some students in discussion (a kind of shoot-from-the-hip approach to conversation), the tendency in a fast-moving discussion to get off track from the main arguments, etc. Overall then, we were somewhat surprised to find that, although technological issues did constitute a large challenge, our greatest challenge was pedagogical – the “fit” between the form of instruction and our actual learning outcomes.

Making Course Corrections

Many of these issues remain stubbornly difficult to completely overcome; the best we can hope for is to ameliorate them. Our attempts to do so have evolved. First of all (and perhaps most obviously) many of the skills and techniques used to guide discussion in the real classroom can be employed in guiding an electronic one. From my experience, one key to effective discussion in the classroom is moving deftly between two

goals in tension with each other: providing students a great deal of freedom to develop their ideas and arguments, while keeping them focused on the central issues and ideas at the heart of the topic of the readings. Tension between these two goals is magnified, from my experience, through the medium of the chat room. Therefore in our electronic chats my colleague and I try to remain on top of the discussion even more than we would in a “real” discussion, and we steer discussion back to the main points very quickly if we feel it has started to veer away too much. We also frequently address our respective classes directly to get them back on track and pose questions that require more substantive and sustained answers. As a way to slow down the chats, in the past we also asked particular students in the class to respond to a specific question before any other student could continue with the chat. However, this appeared to move too far in the direction of controlling (and therefore stifling) discussion. Instead, we decided that the most effective way to slow down the chats and reduce the cacophony of voices in it was simply to divide the group further into sub-chatrooms. Accordingly, we constructed “virtual” small group discussion, with discussions of the larger group being limited to the discussion board, a wrap-up session at the end of each chat, and in the video conferences. Of course, using sub-groups/sub-chatrooms has not been a complete panacea: we still experience some problems with quickly moving chats, the dominating student(s), and superficial conversations, albeit on a much reduced scale. However, in combination with a strict speaking order of students (with 5-6 students in each sub-group), sub-chatrooms have helped improve the quality and speed of the chats immensely – as both we and our students have noted.

The videoconferencing problems we experienced in earlier iterations of the course have been largely ameliorated. For one thing, technology has improved tremendously in the last few years: we now employ full videoconferencing technology rather than a webcam-based system and discussions are not (or at least less frequently) interrupted by technical glitches as they were in 2002 and

2003. Students seem to enjoy videoconferencing more than the electronic chats, undoubtedly because it is simply much more personal. Moreover, our videoconference discussions have been of general high quality, so much so that we have become convinced that videoconferencing can and should become a more frequently used component of our course. On the other hand, videoconferencing has its disadvantages as well: students are much shyer and more awkward with videoconferencing, not all the students participate (the dominating student and shy learner issues once more), and discussions tend to move a bit too slowly sometimes. All in all then, it seems to us that a variety of techniques or forms are called for in our class. My experience has been that discussion boards provide more sustained and substantial student reflection and discussion; but what is lost in a discussion board is spontaneity and a sense of a real exchange of views characteristic of conversations. On the other hand, videoconferencing provides a more personalized, civil, spontaneous, and perhaps more stimulating discussion; yet it can be awkward and not as inclusive as we would like. Finally, real-time chats rooms encourage discussion, participation, and inclusivity, but can also promote superficiality and incivility. Consequently, I have come to believe that our “electronic classroom” needs to include a variety of techniques and approaches to be most effective pedagogically.

The Bottom Line

Despite hurdles we’ve encountered, student response to the class has been overwhelmingly positive. Based on both teaching evaluations as well as the use of focus groups, students continue to find this experience to be a very positive one. Our class receives very high aggregate scores from students and, indeed, several of them told us that this was one of the best classes they had ever had. Just as important, the majority of our students also showed a great increase in their knowledge of the other country. After the class, quite a few students suggested that they had acquired a better understanding of the political culture and political attitudes found among the other

group of students, “where they are coming from.” With few exceptions, our students developed a more empathetic understanding of the dominant views of the other group of students. Thus for the large majority of students, cross-cultural knowledge and skills as well as cross-cultural understanding and empathy increased markedly. Finally, we have hoped that our class can offer something of a “gateway” to the study abroad experience, as well as a way in which some of the goals of study abroad can be fostered. As a direct result of this experience more than a few students expressed their interest in visiting the other country; several did, and several more have told us they still plan to do this. Obviously a class such as ours cannot replace the study abroad experience, nor is it without its own problems or challenges. Nevertheless, our experience with designing and implementing our virtual classroom has been very positive, and we believe it may be instructive for others who struggle with similar issues in the classroom. The course website address is

<http://homepages.uwp.edu/olsenj/german/>



UW-Parkside students enrolled in fall 2009 POLS 290



German students enrolled in fall 2009 POLS 290

Title III at UW-P: Supporting Students' Academic Success

by Suzanne M. Swiderski, Academic Director, First-Year Programs

In October of 2009, the University of Wisconsin-Parkside began administering a five-year grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Title IIIA "Strengthening Institutions Program." This Title III Grant is designed to support UW-P's continuing efforts in developing and integrating its campus-based programs and policies aimed at increasing student success.

Many Students attending UW-P tend to encounter several challenges that can affect their ability to achieve academic success. First, these students often are the first in their family to attend college. Second, for those who have graduated in the bottom half of their high-school class there is an increased likelihood they may have gaps in their foundational learning skills. Third, these students generally work a significant number of hours each week.

To assist this population of UW-P students with these challenges, the Title III Grant will support efforts intended to enhance academic programs, institutional management, and fiscal stability. The goals associated with academic programs highlight two objectives: improving students' readiness for and success during college through services that address their academic needs, and strengthening students' attitudes toward success in college through engagement in co-curricular activities. The goals connected to institutional management center on creating an infrastructure that promotes the sharing of student information and that integrates support services. The goal associated with fiscal stability focus on using the revenue resulting from increased student

retention to fund future student success initiatives.

The efforts supported by the Title III Grant are being managed by the Title III Advisory Committee, which represents various organizational units at UW-P. Key individuals from the administration are Vice Chancellor Steve McLaughlin, the Project Director of the grant, and Bill Blanchard of Institutional Research and Assessment Services. Key individuals from Academic Affairs are myself, the Project Manager of the grant; Susan Hawkins-Wilding of the Advising & Career Center; Jim Robinson of the Teaching & Learning Center; and Christine Tutlewski of Learning Assistance. Key individuals from Student Services are Damian Evans of the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs and DeAnn Possehl of First-Year Experience. Additional members of the Committee are Mark Gesner and Julio Escobedo of the Center for Community Partnerships, the internal evaluators for the grant, and Laurie Taylor of Research Administration.

The Title III Advisory Committee is currently discussing the most beneficial communication channels for keeping all members of the UW-P community informed about grant-supported activities. If you have a question or concern about activities related to the Title III Grant, please feel free to contact me by telephone (at 262-595-2363) or by email (at swidersk@uwp.edu).

OPID UTLG Grant: Formative Evaluation of Reasoned Judgment Goals in the General Education Curriculum

by Jim Robinson, Director, Teaching & Learning Center

OPID awarded UW-Parkside an Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Grant to investigate Formative Evaluation of Reasoned Judgment Goals in the General Education Curriculum during this academic year. Although the standard models of student assessment are semester exams and summative course evaluations, through this grant formative assessment is being used for assessments conducted during the semester to promote, not merely judge or grade, student success. The goal of this process is to use formative evaluation instruments to both inform the instructor of levels of student comprehension and to provide a vehicle for the students to reflect on their learning.

Learning how to learn is a crucial skill that should be addressed early in a student's academic career. Thus, General Education courses were selected with formative assessments occurring four times during the semester using an online instrument called a Course Snapshot Survey. The title reflects the instantaneous time dependent nature of the instrument. It is presented as one survey but it is composed of two parts.

One part of the instrument is based upon the Critical Incident Questionnaire (Brookfield, 1995) which asks a standard set of qualitative questions that encourage students to reflect on the learning process. The intent is to provide a framework for learning how to learn and for recognizing when and how that occurs. Instructor response to student feedback is designed to further facilitate that process.

A second aspect of the instrument is to analyze student engagement with course content from the perspective of the General Education reasoned judgment goals. Instructors pose discipline specific questions which focus on reasoned judgment. Again the goal of those questions is to encourage students to reflect on the learning process. These discipline-based techniques for gathering formative data can

reveal if and when students are attaining the desired competencies and behaviors before summative content assessments occur. They can alert an instructor to the level of student understanding or possible student misconceptions, providing the opportunity to further engage students with the curriculum prior to the content assessment process.

This research involves five disciplines within general education across the Humanities and the Arts, Social & Behavioral Sciences and the Natural Sciences. All faculty members participated in a summer workshop to develop their instruments and integrate them into their curriculum. The instruments are part of the graded course of study for each course. Confidentiality of student responses is maintained when providing instructors with their feedback.

During the fall 2009 semester three faculty members participated; Traci Lee, GSCI 102 - Science and Pseudo Science, Peggy James POLS 104 – Introduction to International relations, and Joe Pearson, PHIL 101 – Introduction to Philosophy. Presently Megan Mullen, COMM 108 – Media and Society and Penny Lyter, HPEA 270 – Lifetime Wellness are participating in the study. During an initial debriefing meeting in December, faculty who had just completed the study shared their insights with the full group. Preliminary results will be discussed on campus at a T&LC Brown Bag session on Wednesday March 3, and statewide in a session at the President's Summit on Excellence in Teaching in Madison in April 29-30.

UPCOMING EVENTS-SPRING 2010

Brown Bag #1: **The Quality Matters Online Course Rubric** – Presented by Megan Mullen & Jim Robinson on Wed., Feb. 3, 2010, 12-12:50 p.m., Faculty/Staff Lounge-Wyllie 247

Brown Bag #2: **D2L: Experiences with Quizzes & Discussion/Chat**- Presented by Jonathan Olsen & Linda Draft on Wed., Feb. 17, 2010, 12:00 - 12:50 p.m. Faculty/Staff Lounge, Wyllie 247.

Learning Communities Working Workshop: Friday, Feb. 26, 2010, 1:00-3:30 p.m. Location to be determined.

Brown Bag #3: **UTLG Research-Formative Evaluation in the General Education Curriculum** –Presented by Patti Cleary, Theresa Castor, Jim Robinson on Wed., Mar. 3, 2010, 12:00-12:50 p.m., Faculty/Staff Lounge, Wyllie 247.

Brown Bag #4: **Online Task Force**-Presented by Megan Mullen & Jim Robinson on Wed., Mar. 24, 2010, 12:00 - 12:50 p.m., Faculty/Staff Lounge, Wyllie 247.

General Education Workshop: Preparing Course Assessment Packages – Presented by Jeff Alexander on Fri., Apr. 2, 2010, 12:00 – 3:30 p.m., Location to be determined.

Brown Bag #5: **Universal Design** – Presented by Christine Tutlewski, Renee' Kirby and Jim Robinson on Wed., Apr. 7, 2010, 12:00 - 12:50 p.m., Faculty/Staff Lounge, Wyllie 247.

Brown Bag #6: **Wisconsin Teaching Fellows/Scholars Research Projects** presented by Dana Oswald, Peggy James & Joe Bergeron on Wed., Apr. 21, 2010, 12:00 - 12:50 p.m., Faculty/Staff Lounge, Wyllie 247.

End-Of-Year Mini-Conference- Fri., May 7, 2010, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m., Location to be determined.

UW-PARKSIDE

Teaching and Learning Center
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
900 Wood Road, P.O. Box 2000
Kenosha, WI 53141-2000

T&LC HOURS
Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

Phone: 262.595.2068
E-Mail: tlc@uwp.edu

<http://www.uwp.edu/departments/teaching.center/>

TLC CALENDAR OF EVENTS-SPRING 2010

Teaching and Learning Center/245 Wyllie

Faculty-Staff Lounge/247 Wyllie

- **Feb. 3, 12-1 p.m.:** Brown Bag-Quality Matters /Faculty-Staff Lounge
- **Feb. 17, 12-1 p.m.:** Brown Bag-D2L /Faculty-Staff Lounge
- **Feb. 26, 3-4:30 p.m.:** Learning Communities Workshop/TBA
- **Mar. 3, 12-1 p.m.:** Brown Bag-UTLG Research/Faculty-Staff Lounge
- **Mar. 24, 12-1 p.m.:** Online Task Force/Faculty-Staff Lounge
- **Apr. 2, 12-3:30 p.m.:** General Education Workshop/TBA
- **Apr. 7, 12-1 p.m.:** Brown Bag-Universal Design/Faculty-Staff Lounge
- **Apr. 21, 12-1 p.m.:** Brown Bag-WTFS Research/Faculty-Staff Lounge
- **May 7, 1-4 p.m.:** End-Of-Year Mini-Conference/Faculty-Staff Lounge



Schedule of Upcoming Teaching/Learning Events

- Feb. 16, 2010:** UW System E-Portfolio Showcase/Pyle Center-Madison (10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.)
- Feb. 26, 2010:** "Analyzing Written & Spoken Data" /Pyle Center-Madison (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
- Apr. 9, 2010:** Sharing LGBTQ Best Practices Conference/UW-Oshkosh
- Apr. 16-17, 2010:** "Leadership and Collaboration | Shaping the Future: The Intersections of Gender, Race , Ethnicity and Sexuality"/UW-Whitewater
- Apr. 29-May1, 2010:** The UW System 2010 President's Summit on Excellence in Teaching & Learning/Madison
- Aug. 4-6, 2010:** 26th Annual Conference on Distance Teaching & Learning/Monona Terrace Convention Center, Madison



OPID CALENDAR/2010

- ❖ Jan. 29, 2010: Conference Development Grants-Final Reports for Fall 2009 due
- ❖ Feb. 1, 2010: Underkofler Awards Review Committee-Appointments due
- ❖ Feb. 16, 2010: 2010 Underkofler Awards –Nominations due
- ❖ Feb. 19, 2010: Undergraduate Teaching & Learning Grants (UTLG) Proposals due
- ❖ Mar. 4-5, 2010: OPID Council-Spring Meeting, Pyle Center-Madison
- ❖ Apr. 2, 2010: Conference Development Grants-Proposals for Fall 2010 due
- ❖ Apr. 9, 2010: Faculty College 2010 – Nominations due
- ❖ Apr. 29-May 2,: OPID/UW System Spring Conference/President's Summit on Teaching & Learning in the UW System, and 2009-10 WTFS Final Meeting
- ❖ Jun 1-4, 2010: Faculty College 2010, UW-Richland
- ❖ Jun 14-18, 2010: 2010-2011 WTFS-Summer Institute, Pyle Center, Madison
- ❖ Jun 25, 2010: Conference Development Grants – Final Reports for Spring 2010 due